

Mag Pherson brings 'A Touch of Class' to her business

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

Officially closed, A Touch of Class by Mag, located at 83 Broadway in Orangeville and owned by Margaret Pherson ('call me Mag?'), is as much a gallery of art work as it is a home decor shop, for the items on sale in the store are all hand crafted. In addition, the work and classes in the back of the shop, deal with the art of refinishing furniture.

Mag is ready to continue her work, as far as current conditions allow. An artist, refinishing antique furniture in white wash, rustic and distressed painting, Mag, like so many other owners of closed shops, can do limited curb side pick-up and drop-off.

'When times were normal and when they are again, we'll hold painting classes in our shop, at the back, teaching people how to refinish their antique pieces of furniture, using country chic chalk paint. ' she told the Citizen.

'We could either show you how to do your own furniture or you can bring it and I'll do it. I use Country Chic Chalk paint because it's a water-based paint ' very versatile. Lot of colours. We sell it too. We like it because it's also certified safe for children's furniture.'

She went on to say, 'There 's not a lot of call for curbside pick-up for furniture and up-cycling of antique furniture. So, I am planning to do a You Tube, showing how to do the painting.'

'Up-cycling antique furniture' really means taking an antique piece, cleaning it up, right to the base wood and bringing it back to life with a completely different look, using the coloured chalk paint, finished in a number of ways.

Mag was speaking from their car, which her husband was driving. They were on their way home from Costco in Newmarket, where it had taken hours to line up 'all the way around to the other side of the building.

'We were there at 10:00. Of course, there's restrictions on how many people go in. Hours to get out again ' it was crazy. There's seven of us at home, so we do a month's shopping at once; then, we'll only need milk and bread and fresh produce from week to week. The shopping is normal, the process sure isn't. But they're necessary.'

'The shop usually stocks home decor and antique furniture, up-cycled. I was going to markets and auctions ' I love them ' and, sometimes, people's homes.'

A large part of Mag's life has been spent doing staging and interior decorating: 'Normally,' she said, 'I do staging on homes for sale and interior decorating and painting.

'I do colour consultation and 'show-casing.' That's for people who are tired of the look of their home and, then, I go in and rearrange the furniture and the pictures and decor. I recommend possible additions. Some of these homes are really nice but people get tired of how they look, after a number of years, and just want their home to look different, fresher. If there's some painting or decorating to do, I offer to do the painting myself.'

The home staging for realtors is another matter.

'I consult on staging for realtors, with what to clean up, get rid of, for staging.'

For this, 'I had to do a Background Staging course for a Certified Staging Professional (CSP). I paid a fortune for an intensive one-weekend course. They jammed it all in a weekend. It was pretty stressful but I passed.'

Furthermore, 'I've been doing interior painting for over 20 years, exterior as well. I've done a whole board and batten house, garage doors, brick ' you name it.'

Even given the current conditions, 'I could still work outside, that's no problem. I do have a crew of two girls. So, there's three of us all together. I consult about those colours too. My daughter, Kirsten, works with me too.'

In the shop, when it was and can be open once more, 'We have custom made barn board mirrors, custom made cheese boards, charcuterie boards, large and medium sized candle holders for in and outside, all hand made. There's a wood working guy that I work with, Brent Buskard, and he does carvings of birds and I sell them in the store as well ' he's also a great contractor ' things that need doing around the house; the man can make anything.

'When the store [at 83 Broadway] came available, I always did the interior consulting and painting and, then, I thought I could do it all out of my shop. We were doing very well before COVID-19 ' crazy ' I almost thought, I'm going to have hire somebody.'

All this began with Mag's 'grandmother, [who] worked at wallpaper store, way back when, and my mom and my aunt were always wall papering and decorating and so, it was in my blood. My father was a professional painter and when I wanted to start painting, he did not like it at all because, he said it was not a woman's job. He said, 'She should be home having a nice time.' He did not like it at all.

'The first job I went, I came home pretty tired and he was sitting on the couch and he said, 'What did I tell you?' And then I made really good money and, eventually, he said, 'Okay, I guess you're good at it ' I guess it's okay.' He's an old -school Italian ' that tells you all you need to know.'

It sounded as though there is a houseful of kids. The eldest, Rachel, 26, lives with her boyfriend. Two others and 'Our youngest daughter, Keira, who's 15, plays soccer at Rep level, three years above her age group. Her grandfather played for Manchester United and her dad played Rep for years. She kicks right and left and she's definitely hoping to be a professional. Playing in the stadium for Team Canada ' that's her dream.'

For Mag, 'My ambition ' I've always kind-of been in that situation of decorating, turning someone's house into their home has always been a passion of mine. I truly think I'm blessed ' I love a challenge, the bigger the better for me?

She said, 'I'm looking forward very much to opening my shop again.'

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